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# SERVICE

## USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

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### NEW YEARBOOK OF AGRICULTURE

Resembles A "Who-Done-It." The 1975 Yearbook of Agriculture is, with only a slight stretch of the imagination, a collection of detective stories. The detectives are agricultural researchers; the settings are the more than 50 agricultural experiment stations around the country. This year the stations celebrate their 100th anniversary — and it's been quite a century. During this period, the agricultural sleuths have discovered vitamins, created hybrid corn, devised new ways to turn deserts into farmland, designed pots and pans for the most effective use of cooking heat (straight sides, flat bottoms, tight-fitting lids), discovered dicumarol to control blood clots in humans, developed plants that do their own pest fighting — and on and on the list goes. One piece of research alone, the development of a vaccine to keep poultry healthy, is estimated to have a worldwide economic value of \$1 billion — besides adding to consumer meat supplies and making possible those neighborhood fried chicken establishments. The new Yearbook, That We May Eat, tells the story of these agricultural detectives and their fascinating and continuing search for ways to help provide a better life for everyone. Copies of the 400-page, hard-cover Yearbook are available for \$7.30 each from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Each member of Congress is furnished with copies for free distribution. The Department of Agriculture does not have any copies for distribution or sale.

### FOOD FACTS AND FUN FOR LITTLE TOTS

#### Are Found In "The Thing The Professor Forgot."

We are never too old or too young to learn  
The foods to select and those to spurn.  
With the basic four food groups, you can't go wrong;  
They help growing bodies stay healthy and strong.  
So, listen, my children. See what we've got?  
A book: "The Thing The Professor Forgot."  
With pictures to color and rhymes to read  
It's a story about all the foods we need.  
What was "The Thing The Professor Forgot"?  
Order a copy and find out "what."  
The booklet, new from USDA,  
Can be put in the mail and headed your way.

Single free copies of "The Thing The Professor Forgot" are available from Department Q, Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, Colo. 81009.



## FOOD PRICES

Here and Abroad. A person living in Washington, D.C., in 1975 paid 53 cents per pound for a loaf of white bread; in Paris the loaf cost 73 cents; and if you were doing what the Romans did, you paid 41 cents for the bread. Back in 1971 — the latest date for figures from other countries — 15.2 percent of the total consumer expenditures in the U.S. went for food; in France it was 26 percent; in Italy, 34 percent. The proportion of consumer expenditures going for food is at a relatively high level in many economically developed areas. But consumers in the developing countries usually devote an even larger share of their expenditures to food. In Ghana, for instance, about 63 percent of the consumer expenditures goes for food. Such statistics takes on a special significance when related to per capita income. For example, in 1974 a Washingtonian worked four minutes to pay for his loaf of bread and an additional eight minutes for a pound of butter to go with it. The worker in Paris earned his bread after 11 minutes and his butter after an additional 24 minutes. The Roman worked four minutes for a loaf of bread and 26 minutes for the butter. Americans work a briefer time to purchase most food items than do most other nationalities. This fact, in combination with the high quality and wide selection of U.S. food items, places the American consumer in an enviable position. For more statistical comparisons and information on food prices around the world, write for "Food Prices Here And Abroad," a new 8-page booklet from the USDA. Single free copies are available from Room 459-A, Office of Communication, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

## GROW A HOUSE PLANT

They Make Good Pets. Suddenly everyone, young and old, has become a grower of house plants. Names like schefflera and diffenbachia are almost household words. The reason, of course, is that house plants make ideal pets: They are quiet; they don't scratch furniture; and they don't escape from cages. But indoor gardeners do face one large problem: Light — or the lack of it. Most homes are simply too dark for good plant growth and need some kind of light to supplement natural sunlight. Studies by USDA horticulturists suggest that fluorescent light does a better job of producing healthy plants, at lower operating cost, than do incandescent plant growth lights. Plants grown under fluorescent lights looked like those grown under greenhouse conditions. They were compact and luxuriant with deep green foliage. Although the plants grown under incandescent lights differed somewhat depending on the kind of light used, all of them tended to be long and stringy. However, the horticulturists' findings do not suggest that incandescent light should be completely shunned for indoor plants. The lights are attractive and effective under some circumstances. But, the scientists point out, with the use of incandescent light you must have reasonably good natural light to begin with if you want really luxuriant plants.

## A QUESTION....AN ANSWER

What's The Most Important Safety Tool In Your Kitchen? Your hands. Keep them clean when cooking. Wash your hands with soap and water after using the toilet. Wash your hands after smoking or blowing your nose. Wash your hands after touching raw meat, poultry, or eggs and before working with other foods.

SERVICE is a monthly newsletter of consumer interest. It is designed for those who report to the individual consumer rather than for mass distribution. For information about items in this issue, write Lillie Vincent, Editor of Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Special Reports Division, Room 459-A, Washington, D.C. 20250, or telephone 202-447-5437.